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Newsletter

ORGANIZATION OF PROFESSIONAL EMPLOYEES OF THE U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

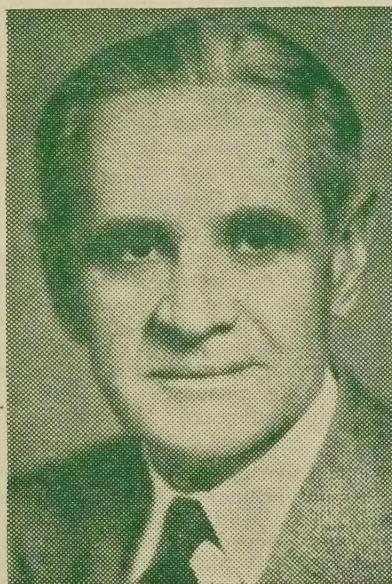
Organized in 1929

JANUARY 1955

Vol. 6, No. 4

Dillard B. Lasseter New OPEDA Executive Officer

OPEDA is very fortunate to have Dillard B. Lasseter serve as its Executive Officer for the 1955 calendar year. In this capacity he will continue the work started last year on the Federal-State retirement bill (H.R. 1553) and in addition will represent all OPEDA members in all legislative matters concerning their welfare.



DILLARD B. LASSETER

In taking over his new responsibilities Mr. Lasseter told the Council he hoped his actions would speak louder than his words and that he was proud indeed to be connected with such an honorable group as OPEDA. He pledged his best efforts in promoting the recommendations of the Council and the Executive Committee, but said that he must be allowed to operate in his own way on the Hill.

"I have learned that in working up there you must have infinite patience," and added that sometimes he worked through the back door.

He assured the Council that he will be available to OPEDA all the time —day or night; if not at the office, at his home. He said he had no other commitments that would embarrass OPEDA.

Concerning the Federal-State re-
(Continued on Page 3)

The OPEDA Officers, Councilmen and Staff join in wishing for all our members a Merry Christmas season and success in the New Year ahead.

It is our sincere belief that 1955 should be the most fruitful year since our founding 25 years ago. This belief is based upon our awareness of the momentum created by our activity for the past quarter of a century, and a noticeable increase in interest on the part of our members everywhere. We know that professional standards and the lot of professional employees in our great Department have greatly improved during our existence, and we feel at least some modest share of this is attributable to the devoted service of the members of our organization.

Happy New Year to You

Indefinite Appointments to be Made Permanent

At long last the Civil Service Commission has taken the necessary steps to change over indefinite appointments to permanent appointments. Those who hold indefinite appointments from competitive CSC registers, and who have completed three years of service, will have permanent status effective January 23, 1955. As other career-conditional appointees complete three years of service they automatically receive permanent status.

You will recall that the Council gave approval to the new CSC appointment plan at the July 27, 1954, luncheon meeting upon recommendation of the Professional Committee.

MEREDITH C. WILSON,
Chairman Professional Committee.

CHANGE OF NAME?

Ballots on changing the name OPEDA not yet counted. The trial questionnaire distributed at the September luncheon meeting showed 48 against change, 40 for. Since many on the Council believed the word "professional" was a barrier to recruitment of members because it always needs explanation, chairman of the name committee, Charles A. Logan, polled the entire membership.

Federal Employees 1955 Almanac Out

Joe Young, editor of the "Federal Spotlight" column of the *Washington Star* has just sent OPEDA a copy of the Federal Employees 1955 Almanac. Into 94 pages Mr. Young has crammed a tremendous amount of information concerning the Federal employee. It

(Continued on Page 4)

Council Action

The consolidation of the constitution and by-laws drafted by Harry Irion's committee was accepted. Printed copies will be available soon.

Two changes were voted in constitution and by-laws, effective January 1, 1955. They provide for biennial election of Council on alternate years to the election of officers and Executive Committee and for dropping delinquent OPEDANS July 1 instead of October 1.

OPEDA will continue to work for a complete reclassification of salaries that will relieve the squeeze on our salary brackets. We have consistently worked toward that type of pay raise, as proposed by the Administration. A proportional increase for classified employees is not tied to an increase in postal rates, and we should urge that classified and postal pay bills be considered each on its own merit rather than as a package deal.

The recommendation of the Economic Committee regarding the Kaplan Report tabled: "That OPEDA oppose in principle the coordination of Civil Service retirement and Social Security."

"At the same time we recognize the need for increased survivor benefits for early career employees at least comparable to those in Old Age Survivors' Insurance and believe that such benefits should be provided through an amendment to the present Civil Service Retirement Act. We would recommend that OPEDA support such an amendment."

Raising dues to \$3 per year to be considered at January Council meeting.

Budget on page four.

HAL LEICH EXPLAINS JOB CLASSIFICATION STANDARDS

An overflow crowd turned out to hear Harold Leich, Chief, Standards Division, U. S. Civil Service Commission, discuss job classification standards at the first fall luncheon meeting of OPEDA, September 21.

Standards have come a long way in the few short years since the program was started in 1943, he pointed out. They have been set up for about all occupations except those in which there are less than 50 persons. These few positions are in the field of budget administration and chemical, civil, and electrical engineering. A recent survey of agencies showed a desire for classification in budget administration.

In establishing standards, he said, the Civil Service Commission first decides what jobs need working up. Then a staff member of the Standards Division goes out on a fact finding tour to agencies having people in such jobs to see them in action. The information gathered in the field is assembled in a form which will be of maximum help and circulated to Federal agencies for their views. If there are disagreements, meetings are called to iron them out. The standards are then printed at the Government Printing Office.

The constant obsolescence of standards because of changes in Federal service as well as in the scientific and professional fields is the greatest problem of the Standards Division, Mr. Leich went on to say. Because they cannot produce standards rapidly enough to keep up with such changes, they ask the agencies to cooperate to an even greater extent in this than in the past.

Advancement in professional or scientific fields is another problem discussed by Mr. Leich. Determining grade levels by the number of persons supervised is actually forbidden by law. Every effort is made to permit the professional worker to advance to the top without taking on administrative duties. The standards written some six, eight, and 10 years ago did not do this.

If a person can prove he has made a contribution to science he can get a grade advance regardless of seniority, but such contributions are hard to prove. Only about one percent of those contesting decisions on these were able to convince the board.

Of special interest to OPEDAANS were Mr. Leich's remarks on the great compression of pay rates between upper and lower limits in the past several years. Those in the old CAF 1 grade, established at \$1,260, are now receiving \$2,500 per annum, an increase of 98 percent; those in the GS-5 grade, established at \$2,000 are now receiving \$3,410, an increase of 70 percent. These percentages decrease proportionately through grade GS-15 which, established at \$8,000, now receives \$10,800, a 35 percent increase. The president vetoed the re-

(Continued on Page 4)

Warren Irons Discusses Health Insurance

Approximately 95 percent of eligible Federal employees are participating in the group life insurance plan enacted at the last session of Congress, Warren B. Irons reported in his talk before OPEDA October 19.

The Metropolitan Life Insurance Co., the largest in the country, is administering the plan. The insurance, however, may be underwritten by every insurance company writing a substantial amount of group life insurance. Of the 287 companies in the United States eligible to underwrite the program, 131 are participating.

Also during the last session Congress instructed the Civil Service Commission to conduct studies in the field of health insurance and submit a proposal to Congress when it convenes in January. A Federal health insurance program is far more complex than life insurance, because there are many kinds.

The Blue Cross and Blue Shield type, for instance, have no national over-all program, but gear their rates to local practices which vary widely. The Group Health Association, Inc., is another type—prepaid medical and hospital service. Some 3,000 Federal employees belong to the local organization, and there are similar plans in different parts of the country. Employees' unions, such as the Letter Carriers' Association, have a company that writes an insurance for them. In addition the American Medical Association is protecting the private practices of doctors. The Commission has the job of developing legislation and operating plans that will satisfy all these groups and still be administratively feasible and of service to the employees.

In the early part of August the Commission asked the insurance companies and the Blue Cross and Blue Shield to form working committees and submit proposals by the end of October. The Commission formed a committee of seven from the Directors of Personnel to review these proposals with the CSC. McHenry Schafer is on the committee. Employee organizations have formed a committee of five to represent them. Mr. James Gilland of General Motors Corporation is also advising the Commission.

When January arrives, perhaps the Administration can go to Congress with a bill that will meet with the approval of everyone. A plan was to be submitted to the little cabinet about December 15.

The health insurance plan cannot be uniform. It will be negotiated at the local level. There are 80 agencies in Washington and many have regional offices in Washington. If each of the 80 agencies had to approve all plans and decide which would be best for their employees, it would be an impossible situation. The Commission hopes to evolve one flexible plan with the best features of each for a reasonable cost.

On the life insurance plan, the Federal government and Federal em-

JERRY KLUTTZ PREDICTS

People were turned away from the OPEDA luncheon meeting of November 16, at which Jerry Kluttz predicted:

A Federal pay raise—It will not be the first bill enacted by the new Congress, Mr. Kluttz said, but it will be retroactive. He wouldn't predict to when. Reasons for the probable delay are many: A large number of members on both the Senate and House Civil Service Committees are new and will have to learn the problems involved. They will try to iron out all differences among the postal workers, classified employees and the administration before introducing a bill.

Establishment of "Senior Civil Servant" grade—The new Hoover Commission will recommend considering each career man who reaches GS-15 for a "Senior Civil Servant" appointment. The 1,000 selected would be paid about \$15,000 a year; they would not hold status in any particular job, but would be assigned to any place in the government service where their particular abilities are needed, although pay would be continuous. Mr. Kluttz thought the idea behind this proposal excellent for the morale of those in high grades because it gave them a feeling of continued usefulness and lifted their advancement ceiling.

Fixing wages of classified and postal employees through Wage Board processes.

Reorganization of the role of the Civil Service Commission—At the present time the Civil Service Commission represents a hodge-podge of interests — management, employees and a number of other conflicting interests. One proposal is that the Commission represent the employees only.

Greater use of electronic machines in the government—Electronic machines are already saving in paper work and record keeping in many agencies. It is planned to use them to forecast smog conditions, to handle veterans' insurance papers at Veterans' Administration; to locate patents at the Patent Office; to process tax returns by Internal Revenue; by the Post Office Department to face mail; by OASI in handling Social Security accounts, among others. The equipment is very expensive and difficult to install, but it is believed it will more than pay in the long run in time and money saved.

Mr. Kluttz also spoke briefly on the hospitalization-medical plan and the Kaplan report.

ployee share the cost— $\frac{1}{3}$ government, $\frac{2}{3}$ employee. On the health insurance program as set up in S-3083 the Federal government would contribute up to \$26 a year, a flat figure that would pay about one-half the cost of a good hospitalization program for the individual employee. It would do nothing, however, toward providing for a catastrophic type of insurance.



OPEDA staff opening ballots. Lila Meyer on the right and Margaret Meehan on left.

The dues notice, Council and name-change ballots came in so fast we brought them from the post office in shopping bags! Thank you for this prompt and spontaneous response. It took a great deal of the time of our part-time staff just to open them—so please be patient while waiting for your new membership card to arrive or for us to change your address.

We notice some of you have crossed out the code number (such as C-2, S-W, W-6, etc.) which appears on each addressograph plate and inserted your grade in its place. These code numbers have nothing to do with your grades—they are merely to identify your agency. The place on the dues notice for inserting your grade was above where the code number appears.

OPEDA is grateful to the following tellers for their assistance in tabulating the ballots for the recent Council election: Miss Dorothy Cooley, REA; James E. Lee, FHA; Walter Schipull, FS; R. E. Johnson, AMS; Sam Detweiler, ARS; Roy Dawson, ARS; Lacy F. Rickey, FCS; Robert A. Laramy, SCS; and Lila Meyer of the OPEDA staff.

LASSETER—From Page 1

tirement legislation on which he worked last spring, Mr. Lasseter said he has very definite commitments from people on the Hill and that he hoped to be able to get it through at the beginning of this session of Congress.

Mr. Lasseter is especially well qualified for this work. Among other important Government positions he has held, he was Administrator of the Farmers Home Administration for six years and prior to that was staff director for the House Civil Service Investigating Committee. He retired from the government service in 1952. Few men have more friends in the United States Congress than does Dilard Lasseter.

He has had leading roles in writing many important bills for Congress and in getting them enacted into law. He was the key man in planning and getting Congress to pass the Farmers Home Administration Act of 1946 which created that agency. The act combined and greatly improved the services of the Emergency Crop and Feed Loan program and the Farm Security Administration.

Mr. Lasseter, a native of Georgia, is a graduate of Emory University, Atlanta. He obtained an M.A. degree from New York University with a major in political science and public law. He was admitted to the Georgia bar and for two years lectured on public administration and public law at Emory University.

Members of the Council for 1955

Admin. Staff Unit

S. B. Herrell¹
Louise O. Bercaw¹
Harry P. Mileham²

Agric. Marketing Service

C. E. Burkhead¹
Lance Hooks¹
C. B. Gilliland¹
Gladys Baker¹
W. Dale Bormuth¹
Melvin Buster²
C. K. Morrison²
Randall Latta²

Agric. Research Service

Charles A. Logan¹
Roy Magruder¹
Ruth L. Busbey¹
Charles Grey¹
Emory D. Burgess¹
Walter M. Scott¹
Harrison S. Haller¹
Frances Debnam¹
Robert B. Harris¹

Research Ser.—(Con't)

T. F. McGinty¹
H. Rex Thomas²
Virginia N. Wright²
Lewis P. McCann²
R. H. Nelson²

Commodity Exch. Auth.

Daniel A. Currie¹
Arthur R. Grosst Stephan²

Commodity Stab. Service

Charles E. Wylie¹
J. Lloyd Whitehouse²

Farm Credit Admin.

Fulton Want¹
R. C. Engberg²

Farmers Coop. Service

Thomas E. Hall¹
J. Warren Mather²

Farmers Home Admin.

Sterling S. Landess¹
Milton B. Allman¹
Jessie T. Hobson²

Federal Ext. Service

Jane Steffey¹
Ed. H. Leker¹
T. Weed Harvey²

Food & Drug Admin.

William Horwitz¹
Dorothy B. Scott²

Foreign Agric. Service

J. Dennett Guthrie¹
C. C. Hearne²

Forest Service

Bernard A. Anderson¹
Frederick W. Grover¹
James G. Osborne¹
Charles W. Mattison¹
Kenneth W. Parker¹
William W. Bergoffen¹

Forest Ser.—(Con't)

Roland Rotty¹
Joseph F. Pechanec²
Milton M. Bryan²
B. O. Hughes²

Rural Elec. Admin.

Richard G. Schmidt¹
Charles Moore¹
Alta Hamlin²

Soil Consrv. Service

A. M. Hedge¹
E. A. Norton¹
Wellington Brink¹
J. C. Dykes¹
Bert D. Robinson¹
Glenn K. Rule¹

R. O. Lewis¹
George W. Musgrave²
George R. Phillips²
N. P. Stephenson²

¹ Voting Member

² Alternate

INCENTIVE AWARDS PROGRAM LIBERALIZED

Civil Service has liberalized the incentive awards program to include nearly all Federal employees except those in TVA, to provide larger cash awards, and to permit employees to receive awards from other than their own agency when other agencies see fit to make use of their suggestions.

Standards determining cash awards are: For savings

up to \$200—\$10; from \$201 to \$1,000—\$10 for the first \$200 saved and \$5 for each additional \$100; \$1,001 to \$10,000—\$50 for the first \$1,000 saved and \$5 for each additional \$200; from \$10,001 to \$100,000—\$275 for the first \$10,000 saved and \$5 for each additional \$1,000; \$100,000 or more—\$725 for the first \$100,000 saved and \$5 for each additional \$5,000.

FROM OUR READERS

KIND WORDS

A retiring member who was not aware that he could retain his membership after retirement writes us:

"I always felt I secured more for my dues in OPEDA than any other organization I belonged to. Hope you retain the present name."

WALT DUTTON

Walt Dutton, former Executive Officer, reports a change of address:

% Director of Agriculture
Box 660, Lusaka
Northern Rhodesia
Africa

MORE NEWSLETTERS

Did you ever consider publishing a newsletter once a month, or thereabouts, especially for the field? We don't have the benefit of reading the Civil Service columnists you read in the Washington papers. Some USDA field people subscribe to various newsletters in order to try to keep up with developments of interest to federal employees. I believe that OPEDA might gain members by adding such a letter, even at an advance in membership dues.

LUNCHEON COMMITTEE

To plan luncheon meetings and take care of details the following committee was named by President Chris Henderson: Stanley Dorick, AMS, chairman; Donald Agnew, AMS; Kenneth McDaniel, OP; Job Savage, FCS; James L. Talbert, CSS; Lila Meyer, OPEDA; and Dorothy M. Martin, FS.

1955 BUDGET

	Total	OPEDA Regular Funds	OPEDA Educational Funds
Executive officer	\$3,000	\$1,450	\$1,550
Office staff	3,840	2,880	960
Miscellaneous postage, printing	960	460	500
Promotional	300	300	
Newsletter	1,180	1,180	
Luncheon notices	192	192	
Totals	\$9,472	\$6,462	\$3,010

HAL LEICH—From Page 2

cent pay bill, which provided a flat five percent increase, Mr. Leich said, as it did nothing to correct these inequities and even increased them with the so-called "floor of not less than \$70 annual increase and not more than \$440."

ALMANAC—From Page 1

covers among other things the Career-Conditional Appointment System, Group Life Insurance Plan, Whitten

Rider, Kaplan Committee Plan, Income Tax Changes, and Salaries.

Cost of the almanac: 75¢, single copy; \$12 for 20 copies; and \$27.50 for 50 copies.

OPEDA

Issued at Washington, D. C., Each Quarter of Calendar Year.

(Not printed at Government expense)

Purpose of publication: Dissemination of information pertaining to the welfare of professional employees of the U. S. Department of Agriculture.

OPEDA STARTS DRIVE FOR NEW MEMBERS

December 7, 1954

President Henderson has appointed a committee to plan and spark a membership drive throughout the Department. The committee is composed of C. E. Burkhead, chairman, AMS; Melvin V. Cole, FHA; Neil W. Johnson, ARS; Ray W. Lynn, REA; E. A. Norton, SCS; Roland Rotty, FS; and Luke Schruben, FES.

The purposes of this committee are to develop and recommend plans for each agency to use in recruiting members, assist each agency in putting on the campaign, and to recommend membership techniques, materials, and publicity to the OPEDA Council. The committee plans to set up a program which will give every eligible employee in the Department, both in the field and in Washington, a chance to join OPEDA. The work will be planned so that no one individual will be burdened in making this membership drive a success.

The committee hopes to double the present membership during 1955. Their slogan is "5,000 in '55." In the meantime, the committee urges all Council members to push the membership campaign and thereby increase the influence of OPEDA. A growing membership means a growing organization.

CUT ON THIS LINE AND MAIL

Organization of Professional Employees
of the U. S. Department of Agriculture
P. O. Box 381 — Washington 4, D. C.

Date _____, 195____

Application hereby is made for membership in the Organization of Professional Employees of the United States Department of Agriculture, the annual dues of which are \$2.00 per year and for which there is no initiation or membership fee.

Name (First name in full: Mr., Mrs., Miss, Dr.)

Address _____

Bureau _____ Div. or Branch _____

Title _____ Classification: GS-_____

Enclosed is check (), currency (), money order () for \$2.00 for 195 ____ dues.
(Checks or money orders may be made payable to Org. Prof. Employees USDA, or simply to O.P.E.D.A.)

(Signature of Applicant)

OPEDA
P. O. Box 381
Washington 4, D. C.

Sec. 34.65(e), P.L.&R.